
Communities

How Can We Decrease Childhood Overweight in Utah?

In 2006, Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. released the *Utah Blueprint to Promote Healthy Weight in Children, Youth, and Adults*. The goal and objectives below are taken from that document. The document is available at <http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity/docs/obesityblueprint.pdf>.

GOAL: Utah's communities will assume an active role in addressing overweight.



Objective 1: Increase the number of active community environments (ACEs) in your community.

- Use community partnerships to develop, implement, and promote programs that encourage regular physical activity.
- Encourage transportation and infrastructure changes that promote non-motorized and mass transportation use.
- Develop safe routes and systems, such as walking school buses, for children and seniors that encourage walking and biking within neighborhoods and to schools.

Objective 2: Increase availability of and access to affordable or free recreation opportunities for physical activity.

- Develop well-designed local and state-level recreational and park sites and facilities.
- Increase the number, type, and availability of community-based recreational sports programs, including intramural recreation programs.
- Develop policies to increase access to public facilities for physical activity, such as after school use of school fitness facilities by the community.

Objective 3: Improve the availability of and access to healthy foods in neighborhoods.

- Encourage and support community-based gardening and farmers markets.
- Support the use of locally grown produce in schools.

Objective 4: Increase the proportion of mothers who breastfeed their infants and toddlers.

- Encourage the availability of breastfeeding-friendly community environments.
- Work with public health, community health, and other segments of the community to provide education regarding the benefits of breastfeeding.

Objective 5: Increase number of cities and towns that participate in A Healthier You (AHY) Community Awards Program.

- Increase participation of mayors and city business managers on the AHY, Community Award Program Committee.

Examples of Success:

A Healthier You, Healthy Community Awards Program

This program recognizes the outstanding achievements of Utah cities/towns in implementing health-related policies and ensuring healthy community environments that encourage and support residents and public employees in making healthy choices. Participation in five health-enhancing areas is required: healthy behaviors, nutrition, physical activity, preventive services, and safety. Bronze, silver, gold, and platinum level awards are distributed annually.

Examples of Success (continued):

Sandy City (2006 Platinum Recipient): Highlights include a policy to encourage the inclusion of trail systems and walking paths in existing and new subdivisions which include the four-mile Port Rockwell Trail that was opened in 2005 and goes through seven subdivisions. The city also conducted a dental screenings for disadvantaged children at a local elementary school. The city has a community-wide health coalition that addresses the five key health topics. Sandy City Parks and Recreation held a *Family Night* at Lone Peak Park where 50 bicycle helmets were given away in a drawing and additional helmets were available for \$5.00.

Smithfield (2006 Gold Recipient): Highlights include an ordinance prohibiting smoking in Smithfield City parks and recreational areas owned or leased by the City. 100% of their elementary schools (2) participate in the Gold Medal Schools Initiative.

Healthy Dixie (2006 Silver Recipient): Highlights include an ordinance that requires new subdivisions to provide sidewalks and street lights. To accomplish an infrastructure requirement, six focus groups were held to assist in updating the Parks, Recreation, Arts and Trails Master Plan.

Midvale City (2006 Bronze Recipient): Highlights include increasing the number of smoke-free outdoor recreation facilities, which was accomplished by the City Council banning cigarette smoking in public parks, ball fields, and the city cemetery. Additionally, Midvale City has a community garden with 17 plots which are used by long-time residents and new immigrants.

Hyde Park (2005 Gold Recipient): Highlights include a designated walking trail with mileage markers at Lion's Park and a monthly newsletter that was distributed to residents providing information on walking, walkability, and accessibility. In February 2005, the City passed an ordinance that prohibits the use of tobacco in all parks and recreational areas owned by the City.

Provo City (2005 Bronze Recipient): Provo City launched a program called *Step-Up Provo*, providing pedometers to the first 150 residents who signed up and linking their walkers to the Utah Walks Web site. The city promoted the use of marked trails and trail development by completing Big Springs Park, which included a network of trails.

Resources:

A Healthier You Legacy Awards recognizes college campuses, communities, schools, and worksites that increase opportunities for healthy behaviors, nutrition, physical activity, preventive services, and safety. The Web site includes award criteria, a resources manual, and more resources. Located at <http://health.utah.gov/ahy>.

Utah Walks Web site provides a method for tracking physical activity. It can be used by individuals, groups, or community motivation to be more active. Located at www.utahwalks.org.

Check Your Health provides resources to encourage people to eat healthy and be active. Included are nutrition, walking, weight control, healthy dining-out tips, and low fat recipes. Located at <http://www.checkyourhealth.org>.

Tipping the Scales Toward a Healthier Population: The Utah Blueprint to Promote Healthy Weight for Children, Youth, and Adults, developed by key partners in Utah to promote a healthy weight among Utahns. Located at <http://health.utah.gov/obesity/docs/ObesityBlueprint.pdf>.

National League of Cities aims to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. One of their key program areas addresses childhood obesity. Located at <http://www.nlc.org/iyef/index.cfm>.
